IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows.

Page 1, please amend paragraph 1 as follows:

--This application is a continuation-in-part application of pending U.S. Patent [[Application No. 09/446352]] 6,429,188, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.--

Page 6, please amend paragraph 19 as follows:

--Vasoactive intestinal peptide (VIP) was first isolated from the porcine duodenum and in 1974, Mutt and Said (See, V. Mutt et al., European Journal of Biochemistry 1974, 42:581) established the amino acid sequence. VIP contains 28 amino acid residues as shown in SEQ ID NO: 1 in the accompanying "Sequence Listing" and Fig. 10, with a highly conserved sequence in vertebrates, a fact that is consistent with its important biological role. It is known today that VIP is a pleiotropic peptide produced by neurons in different areas of the central and peripheral nervous system and by endocrine cells as the pituitary lactotrophes and cells of the endocrine pancreas.--

Page 13, please delete paragraph 49 and insert the following paragraphs:

--Fig. 8A shows the circulating levels of IL-6 in C57BL/6 x 129Sv mice injected with 1 mg/mouse LPS, LPS plus 5nmol/mouse VIP, or LPS plus 5nmol/mouse PACAP38.

Fig. 8B shows the circulating levels of IL-6 in PAC -/- mice injected with 1 mg/mouse LPS, LPS plus 5nmol/mouse VIP, or LPS plus 5nmol/mouse PACAP38.

Fig. 8C shows the circulating levels of TNFα in C57BL/6 x 129Sv mice injected with 1 mg/mouse LPS, LPS plus 5nmol/mouse VIP, or LPS plus 5nmol/mouse PACAP38.

Fig. 8D shows the circulating levels of TNFα in PAC -/- mice injected with 1 mg/mouse LPS, LPS plus 5nmol/mouse VIP, or LPS plus 5nmol/mouse PACAP38.--

Page 13, after paragraph 50, please add the following paragraphs.

--Fig. 10 shows an amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 1) of 28 residues for vasoactive intestinal peptide/pituitary adenylate cyclase-activating peptide receptor (VIP).

Fig. 11 shows an amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 4) of 27 residues for [K 15 ,R 16 ,L 27]VIP [1–7]-GRF [8–27] as VPAC1-specific agonist.

Fig. 12 shows an amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 5) of 31 residues for Ro 25–1553 Ac-[Glu 8 ,Lys 12 ,Nle 17 ,Ala 19 ,Asp 25 , Leu 26 ,Lys 27,28 ,Gly 29,30 ,Thr 31]-VIP cyclo [21–25] was used as VPAC2-specific agonist.--

Pages 16-17, please amend paragraph 62 as follows.

--Method: BALB/c mice were injected with RPMI 1640 medium, LPS (400 µg), or LPS plus VIP or PACAP-38 (5 nmol). Peritoneal cells were harvested at 1 h (for TNFα) and 2 h (for IL-6), and total RNA was isolated from peritoneal cells. Twenty micrograms (µg) of total RNA from each sample were electrophoresed on 1.2% agarose-formaldehyde gel, transferred to nylon membranes, and cross-linked using UV light. Membranes were hybridized with specific probes for TNFα represented by SEQ ID NO: 2 in the accompanying "Sequence Listing" (5'-TTGACCTCAGCGCTGAGTTGGTCCC CCTTCTAGCTGGAAGACT-3') and IL-6 represented by SEQ ID NO: 3 in the accompanying "Sequence Listing" (5'-CAAGAAGGCAACTGGATGAAGTCC TCTTGCAGAGAAGGAACTTCAT-3') that were designed from the murine TNF-a and IL-6 cDNA published sequences (See, L. Fransen et al., Nucleic Acids Research 1985, 13:4417; and H. E. Grenett et al., Nucleic Acids Research 1990, 18:6455). The probe for the murine 18S RNA, as a quantity control for RNA, was an oligo-nucleotide (5'-CCAATTACAGGGCCTCGAAAGAGTCC TCTA-3') derived from the published sequence.

Oligonucleotides were 3'-labeled with digoxigenin-dUTP/dATP mix using terminal transferase, and hybridization and detection of chemoluminiscent signal were performed.--

Page 20, please amend paragraph 74 as follows:

--The purified macrophage preparations were approximately 96% Mac-1 $^{+}$ by FACS analysis. Isolated peritoneal macrophages were seeded in flat-bottom 96-well microtiter plates at 8×10^{4} cells per well in a final volume of 200µl DMEM supplemented with 2 mM L-glutamine, 100 U/ml penicillin, 10µg/ml streptomycin and 10% FCS (complete DMEM) Cells were stimulated with 0.5µg/ml of LPS in the absence or presence of different concentrations of VIP, VPAC1, VPAC2, or PAC1 agonists at 37°C in a humidified incubator with 5% CO2. [K 15 ,R 16 ,L 27]VIP [1–7]-GRF [8–27] was used as VPAC1-specific agonist ,wherein the sequence is shown in Fig. 11 and SEQ ID NO: 4 in the accompanying "Sequence Listing" (Gourlet P et al.; Peptides 1997,18:1539), Ro 25–1553 Ac-[Glu 8 ,Lys 12 ,Nle 17 ,Ala 19 ,Asp 25 , Leu 26 ,Lys 27,28 ,Gly 29,30 ,Thr 31]-VIP cyclo [21–25] was used as VPAC2-specific agonist ,wherein the sequence is shown in Fig. 12 and SEQ ID NO: 5 in the accompanying "Sequence Listing" (See, M. Xia et al., The Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics 1997, 281:629). Cell-free supernatants were harvested at the designated time points and kept frozen (–20°C) until cytokine and NO determination.--